

## II

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION

THE whole world is waiting to see the development of a stable government in China. This interest is doubtless in some measure a practical one, for the reason that only a stable national organization can be prosperous and so provide the mutual benefits that flow from trade.

But this expectant interest has much more than a material basis. Here is the last of the great nations effecting political changes that in other countries have become history. The mere spectacle of a quarter of the world's population undertaking a fundamental reorganization of its national life is as impressive as the formation or disintegration of an ancient empire. It does not mean the ascendancy of a barbarian horde, spreading out a feudal fabric unified by a monarchy and gradually extending political privileges to the people. This is a population nearly homogeneous in type and of the highest level of civilization, solidified by a culture of unbroken continuity through three thousand years. It is not an assembly of diverse fragments held together by iron bands of authority. It is a people on whom government has always rested lightly, and who have drawn their power of cohesion from other than political sources.

A few years ago this stupendous body suddenly dropped the political cloak it had always worn and began to try on another of Western fabrication. It seemed a simple matter to take well tried political forms and fit them together into the required garment. But it proved too strange and

cramped for the giant, who could not forget his inefficient and often clumsy, but always decorative and lightly worn, habiliments. Now the whole construction is a mass of rags. China is still furiously thrashing about in naked confusion.

Too much is always expected of a revolution. Most states have been formed after conquest when reorganization proceeded with the definiteness of a single will and the certainty of overwhelming force. It always seems that with a successful disruption of the controlling power, the processes of reconstruction would be as easy, as simple, and as successful. But this is never so. A revolution is always a phase of domestic political development. It is a type of reaction which, if it is anything more than a substitution of one tyranny for another, is effected by the profounder forces of a people's life. The phase of violence is only the breaking crest of a great wave. The French Revolution occupied two centuries rather than the short decade of its dramatic expression. Western political history during the nineteenth century was the reality of the French Revolution.

But the leaders and supporters of a disruptive movement have the fullest expectation that it will suddenly achieve that ideal statehood which they so ardently desire. It always seems that if we could only be released from our bonds, we could instantly soar to divine heights. This is the delusion of freedom. In practice and in fact, conduct, unless held under extraordinary constraint, remains the same whether under bondage or under freedom. If all married people with a sense of being tied to each other could be magically released, nearly all would be re-married to the same persons within a month. Life is lived as an expression of its own forces flowing through channels which the years have fixed and deepened. Bondage is simply a feeling of constraint, and freedom a feeling of choice, each

attached to the same act which derives from entirely other causes. So it is with a people. Organized life is a construction of many thousands of years of slow adjustment. It is built into the very tissue of every new generation. Men do things in certain ways just as they walk, because they have command of no other way.

It follows that if a wave of political change touches the depths of a people's life, which means its habits, customs, usages, attitudes, and values, it is in contact with something as solid as a rockbound shore against which the waters waste their strength. A careful study of revolutionary movements shows that when the flood recedes there has been perhaps a superficial scouring, but the essential topography of the people's life emerges unchanged.

If this is true of revolutions in general, it is doubly true of one in China. For in that country political life and social life have never intermingled. The empire maintained itself because it never interfered with the structure and operations of Chinese society. The government was of course always present, like the weather, something that might cause inconvenience, but had to be tolerated and whose taxes had to be paid. But it amounted to very little more. The conduct of the people with all its interlinking relationships moved with independence. At the present moment, when the only kind of government known in China is of one type, varying from a bandit chief with a handful of armed ruffians, extorting his living from a village, to the war lord extorting his living from a group of provinces, the life of the Chinese goes on as it has done for thousands of years, with its own terms of cohesion and its own control of conduct. If the whole military and governmental mechanism should be swept away overnight, China would

simply breathe a great sigh of relief and go on exactly as before.

Into this situation have been injected a multitude of ideas and forms brought back by students of political institutions in the West, and all of us Westerners, because these ideas and forms seem to us normal, imagine that they can be speedily and successfully applied to Chinese society. For example the new code enacted by the Republic is a transcript of the Napoleonic code with Prussian emendations. This is presented for acceptance to a people who adjust their relationships and settle their differences in terms of immemorial custom. A moment's reflection on the growth of a legal system makes it obvious that the Chinese will have a code only after decades of drawing regulations and rules out of their own usages. The constitutions proposed are copies taken from the most highly evolved charters of self-government found in the West. These are presented for acceptance to a people to whom legislative functions are as strange as if they had just arrived from a distant planet.

It was inevitable that the change in China should be initiated and engineered by those who had most completely inoculated themselves with Western thought, that is, the returned students. The Chinese, searching in our universities and communities for the technical secrets of our material success, could not fail to be impressed by our forms of political organization. Indeed the interest of an oriental student is apparently attracted more easily to the fields of politics and economics than to any other. It was obvious that the West excelled under a republican organization, and so a republic seemed the device which the patriotic Chinese should understand and transfer to his own homeland. Not this only, but an ultra-modern political philosophy showed

how republics could be improved in a direction which seemed still more beneficial to the mass of the people, the direction of socialism. Since a great majority of the students came from Canton it is easily comprehended that upon their return they should produce an atmosphere which, however foreign to the genius of China, provided for them what appeared to be the final expression of Western thought. There was nothing unhealthy in this except for the fact that it had no corrective in the criticism of other thinkers and of practical men.

The returned student was slowly incorporated into the administration, but still as a subordinate to the old type of official. It is not certain that he could have secured any greater influence had it not been for the continuous heavy pressure from the outside during the first years of the century. To westernize or be destroyed was the dilemma confronting the dynasty. The decision was finally taken, the traditional examinations were discontinued, and the empire witnessed the most momentous of all revolutionary changes, the fall of the mandarin.

To appreciate the significance of this step one must recall that the system dated back to the legendary days of the founding of the empire, when the families provided the emperor with their ablest sons to assist him in the work of government. In course of time the examinations were standardized into the most exacting tests to which the human mind could be subjected, and the reward of high office fell only to those able to pass. We of the West have been accustomed to ridicule the Chinese training in the classics and capacity to write perfect essays, as qualifying for the practical duties of administration. Our schools for such training place a minimum of value upon literary ability.

This, however, is to misconceive the significance of the mandarin class in China. Administration there was a different sort of thing, involving only a few of the capacities needed by western officials. The country lives and works under an established custom economy. Relationships are defined as the result of ancient experiment and adjustment. Conduct contains its own guiding principle. Any question of right turns upon conformity to usage. Transgressors are few and such disputes as arise can be decided by the wiser heads of families or those charged with the conduct and welfare of the guilds. A dispute that reached the yamen had, so to speak, already passed beyond the proper field of Chinese adjudication. It was somewhat as if disputants refused all measures of mediation and settlement and carried the fight to the limits of outlawry. An official trial was therefore never understood to be other than a continuation of the struggle in which each side made a bid for official help. The highest bidder usually won.

In the presence of a system of this kind in which ethical principle is all dominant, and law means nothing more than sporadic imperial edicts, it is reasonable that the best official is one who is an able exponent of the principles of conduct. And if these principles have been elevated to the status of a beautiful literature, then obviously the most influential official would be he who could add to the strength of this commendation. Chinese history presents a long, unbroken road for the simple reason that control of conduct by an ethical system has never been disrupted.

The fall of the mandarins meant the ascendancy of the returned students, and in their train that larger group produced by the westernized schools of Japan and of China herself, provided with a smattering of knowledge, part

Oriental and part Western, ill-assorted and undigested. It was in this medium, especially in the south, that the idea of a republic gained adherents, grew and flourished.

After the death of the old Empress it was impossible for her weak successors to retain sufficient power to uphold the Manchu rule. The stronger adherents had been affronted or retired through fear of their influence, and so the dynasty, relying only upon the weak, tottered to its fall.

Revolution broke out in 1911 on the Yangtse, and quickly spread through the central provinces. It was not at first conceived to be other than anti-dynastic but was quickly seized and dominated by the republicans under the consummately skillful leadership of Wu Ting Fang. To this able representative of the old official class belongs the credit of having guided the first and most difficult steps of the revolution into a movement to end the imperial order in China for all time. The more spectacular Sun Yat Sen, who had been publicity and financial agent, but who possessed no administrative ability and little capacity for leadership, has been raised to the pedestal as the hero of the Revolution.

The republican provincial government established in Nanking, the ancient southern capital, had still to face the more conservative north, now dominated and led by the ablest man China has known in this century, Yuan Shi Kai, recalled into service by the throne as premier of the kingdom and head of the army. It is well known that Yuan effected what amounted to a betrayal of the dynasty after prolonged negotiations with Nanking, that under carefully perfected face-saving arrangements he secured the abdication of the monarch, and for this service became provisional president of the Chinese republic. The bargain made by the republicans seemed fully justified, for the new president quickly

obtained recognition by foreign nations and, most important of all, secured loans from abroad. But his ambition grew apace and presently, as creator and head of China's westernized army, he had garrisoned all the provinces under his lieutenants, and with secure military control he proceeded to spurn cabinet and parliament, and then to seize the crown and create a dynasty.

Two difficulties intervened. One was the fact that a republican movement had come to represent a real and widespread determination to change the form of government. In spite of the carefully arranged election which would place him on the throne by the will of the people, Yuan knew that he was grasping only an empty shell. The other difficulty was that Yuan had been compelled to accept while the Western world was preoccupied with its own life and death struggle, the twenty-one demands presented by Japan. No Chinese official, however powerless to do otherwise, could be the vehicle for so great a degradation and expect to survive. Yuan realized that the crown was beyond his reach and the rage and disappointment of his defeated ambition hurried him to his death in 1915.

For the past dozen years developments in China have been many, but they all possess the same characteristics. The history has been of one piece. With the head removed the military governors in the provinces simply took charge and each one acted according to his discretion, ambition, and ability. Lesser chieftains followed the same course and conducted themselves in their own areas as did the tuchuns in the provincial capitals. It was inevitable that a contest would arise to determine whose ambitions would triumph, and so China entered upon that program of chaotic civil war which has continued to the present moment. Because of the spectacular character of all warlike activity,



a greatly exaggerated importance has been attached to the doings of the militarists. The emergence of the four or five so-called war lords who are now contending for supremacy seems to indicate that large areas have come under a coherent control, and that the final outcome will represent the triumph of one or another party. This expectation is, in my opinion, without a basis. Our observations of similar conditions in Western countries provide no ground for drawing similar conclusions. A dictatorship maintaining itself by armed force will prove impossible in China. The only parties formed thus far are held together not by principle, but by self-interest. Adherence must carry benefits, and the price is collected by the threat of defection. China cannot be ruled by force alone, because in China force must be personally exerted, which means that its effective limits are narrow.

If a general dictatorship could be established it would itself prove the greatest barrier to the establishment of civil government. The tuchuns would continue as at present the sole agents of authority in the provinces. The local rule of these chiefs would continue as now, and with it the extortion which is ruining the country gentry and the city merchants. In other words a general dictatorship would consist of the same multitude of small dictatorships. Each would advance its interest by intrigue, combination and threat of revolt. The use of soldiers would mean, as at the present, the appropriation of all public income to sustain the military machine. Deficiencies would continue to be supplied by pillage. It should be understood that this kind of control is unnecessary for any portion of the organized life of the Chinese people. If the whole thing would be swept away the country would be exactly as before only relieved of a terrible burden.

Military action as such has little or no importance in China. Great sweeping movements are carried out with little loss of blood except by the civilian population. One day's fight on the western front killed more soldiers than a decade of civil war in China. The mode of operation that brings success is to secure the defection of enemies. The Cantonese secured the Wuhan cities from Wu Pei-Fu because his most trusted general went over and delivered Hanyang. The armies of Sun Chuang Fang were beaten, not by battle but by treachery. It is simply a very dramatic game for which the country has to pay. Armies aggregating a million are costly toys to support. Nor does it matter whether a particular place is occupied by one faction or another. The newcomers simply drive out the odious and oppressive bandits as they call their predecessors, for which service they require the civilians to express substantial appreciation. Any idea that the political reconstruction of China will be carried out by one or several of the war lords is illusory and absurd.

This, however, is not the final account of the effect of military action. There is an important sense in which military organization is father of the political state. It is not the result of battles or of conquest of territories that really counts; it is rather the holding of great numbers of men in a system which is the precise contrary of their traditional forms of organization. In the West the family system with its control by custom was broken by the detachment, through hundreds of years, of men for service in the wars. Military organization means discipline, control by direct command and by regulation, combination in terms of individuals and the planting of personal ambition as a motive of exertion. Men become the units of organization in contrast with families. Law comes to be understood as a

development of regulation in contrast with custom. In other words, military life is an education leading toward individual citizenship. This, I believe, is the proper assessment of the value of civil war in China. It is a portion of the curriculum of nations learning to be republics.

The second important factor during the period since 1915, is the student population of the universities and other schools. These, as already mentioned, have been impregnated with Western conceptions, and most of them believe themselves to have received a Western education. But in this matter the quality of scholarship hardly comes into question. The students have constituted themselves a political factor because they provide the only widespread medium of public opinion in China. The body of the people are not vocal, learning of any kind commands great respect, and newspapers, though multiplying rapidly, have but a limited and personal influence. Through the student population, then, the waves of opinion are propagated, with the lack of critical restraint to be expected of schoolboys, and with a vehemence found always associated with youth. The actual method is that of speechmaking, posting of placards, and organizing of demonstrations. In other words, opinion moves as a form of mob action, and is never far from advocacy of violence.

When in 1919 it appeared that the Peace Conference would confirm the Japanese claim to inheritance of German interests in China, and America, the traditional friend, failed to lend her protection, the student population rose in a nationwide protest. Those who had accepted the Japanese demands were driven into retirement, and a boycott of everything Japanese was initiated and carried through with such thoroughness as to recover more ground than had been lost in the Conference. Japan discovered her-

self being more effectively barred from the continent than if held by restraint of armies and navies. It was an example of unanimity which makes one hesitate to say that the Chinese are unable to undertake unified action. The other convincing example was the extermination of the poppy, and elimination, not only of the trade in opium but of its use, carried out in a few years and by a tottering monarchy.

The successful boycott of Japan depended of course upon the response and coöperation of Chinese merchants, who since that time have not shown themselves amenable to student leadership. It has, however, been possible to stir coolies into demonstrations which, because of their inflammable nature, constitute a grave danger. The students played their characteristic part in the mob action that resulted in the unfortunate incidents of 1925 at Shanghai, Shameen, and Hankow. Through them, anti-foreign propaganda is carried on now under the skillful guidance of Russian agents. They have tried their hand at curbing the political action of the militarists, but merely succeeded in having a number of their demonstrators shot down by the soldiery. In general, student leadership in the past two years has so far overplayed as to discredit itself. This is healthy as a restraint upon the pretentious ambition of the students to dominate China in all political matters. Public affairs in the hands of excited boys can hardly be conducted otherwise than foolishly. In the long run, however, the students will play an important part in the reconstruction of China. When the present generation matures and develops a sense of reality, they will provide an essential linkage between the leaders of the nation and the masses of the people. Their attention to politics is now enormously exaggerated, but to have a generation of schoolboys

thinking about national affairs, however misguided that thinking may be, will in time prove a valuable asset.

The third great factor in the China of to-day, as of all previous periods, is the country gentry with whom may be associated the merchants in the towns and cities. These constitute what corresponds to the middle class in western countries. But since China has no aristocracy they stand as the chief representatives of the life and work of the people. They have never in the past concerned themselves with public affairs beyond the peaceful conduct of community life and trade. In a national sense they are inactive and have not even become vocal. They desire and expect, as in the past, that governmental affairs will somehow work themselves out to a conclusion. It matters little what, if it will save them from disturbance. Here is the really powerful element in the Chinese population. Until they move it cannot be said that the events in China are more than a stirring of the surface. Their policy is as always a patient waiting, expecting as always to endure until conditions can become favorable. The country gentry has suffered seriously at the hands of the militarists, the merchants in lesser degree since local trade has not been seriously impeded. The gentry is not organized, but the merchants have their guilds and chambers of commerce, which are strong and influential. The repeated levies for funds to support the soldiery are slowly prodding this class into action. They are now confused by political catch phrases and anti-foreign propaganda. When they arrive at the point of unloading the military burden, it is my opinion that this will be done effectively. In the long run China will probably develop a governmental machinery closely associated with the commercial organization of the country, as it is in this field that the Chinese have genera-

tions of practice in the conduct of extensive organization.

The central question respecting China is whether there has been any real and definite step toward orderly government of the Western type since the destruction of the Empire. The answer is negative, in spite of pretensions to republican forms, to the establishment of courts and western codes, to the acceptance of constitutional principles and the general claim that a westernized system is ready to function upon the cessation of civil war. The republic exists in the minds of a handful of returned students. China as a whole has hardly a remote understanding of what it means. That all the events since 1911 have a relevance to political change no one can doubt. A new nationhood will be born, of all these labor pains. But it is by way of preparation only, a plowing of the field for something not yet capable of definition.

Republics, after all, are products of social-evolution. They are integral to the whole Western scheme of things. That which resulted from a thousand years of European history cannot be lifted, transferred and adopted. It depends at every moment of its existence upon the habits and attitudes of men and the usages of society. It was the development of a democratic society that effected the transition from monarchial to republican forms. A government of this character is a tremendous instrument for gathering and applying the consensus of thought and the collective purposes of a prepared citizenship. But purposes which coördinate the activities of men, marshal them upon the road of progress and direct them toward a realization of social ideals, are themselves rooted in the past. They bring forward and express all that a people has been. It is absurd to think of a constitution as a mere instrument, a formal plan for the operation of a government. Every-

one knows that the British constitution is a body of principles, never standing by themselves but embodied in all acts of legislation, building itself through centuries of national life. Our own constitution is infinitely more than a fixed plan. It, too, is a growth of controlling principles from the beginning of the republic, through more than a century of practical application to circumstances as they have arisen in our development. Our social past gave these principles their first statement, and our national past determines the direction in which future changes will take place. We need to recover these elementary facts about the nature of government to save ourselves from disappointment if we expect to see China display the reality of republicanism after a few years of turmoil.

The Chinese people are constituted as a clan society under a custom economy. The only political organization they have ever had, and indeed the only one possible so long as that type of society persists, is a personal system acting through a hierarchy of deputed authority. The rulers have naturally always been conquerors, either domestic or foreign. The fundamental difference between China and the West is that the latter, after conquest, developed feudalism, a system which made the absorption of custom control into legal control a matter only of time. The rulers of China spread a thin fabric over the vast cultured population without in any way disturbing the domination of custom. As already stated, the officials were not primarily administrators but distinguished exponents of the ethical system. Hence the solidarity, durability, and independence of Chinese civilization.

If what has already been said regarding constitutionalism is kept in mind, it will be realized that China in accepting a régime of this type will be making use merely of the

forms in which government is cast, while her real constitution will express her own past. This has transpired in other countries. Argentina provides a good example in the use made since independence of republican forms, back of which operated native principles and concepts. More than half a century elapsed before form and principle began to come into accordance. Whether Western governmental forms could serve as vehicles for the real Chinese constitution is a matter of doubt before the experiment is tried. So far they have promptly gone to pieces.

The reports persistently promulgated in this country regarding the advances in westernization of the Chinese, have to be taken with a grain of salt. A few thousand students do not represent the Chinese people, and the westernization of these students is, with the majority, a very superficial affair. It must be kept in mind that Chinese life is what it has been for many centuries, and that it has no proper comparison with organized life in the West. With all government broken down, with military control universal, with every leader practising his own method of extortion, with a court system that is a farce, Chinese life, short of conditions of siege or massacre, treats all these things as minor disturbances. The processes of government have always been separate from this organized life, and left absolutely to those who happened to operate them. When an official became too oppressive the people rose in some kind of revolt, which was usually taken by the central government as an indication that its official was at fault. There could be no more profound misconception than that the Chinese people have been stirred to political consciousness, or that they have very much to do with what is happening in China. Class-conscious labor organizations are naturally to be found in the foreign concessions where



factories operate, and where agitators can apply a lesson of organization learned in the West. But this is a mere drop in the sea of the working Chinese population.

As a matter of fact, the nearest approach to Chinese conditions found in our own history displayed itself during the fifteenth century. At that time the merchant craftsman with his guild organization was almost a precise counterpart of the present-day Chinese merchant. But in the West even five centuries ago, the family system was already undergoing disintegration, whereas in China the clan has as yet hardly been touched. In the West the various stages of development were passed with a speed that meant continuous readjustment from absolute monarchy to the democratic republic. To ask the Chinese to lift themselves through all the stages of five centuries in a few years, is to voice an impossible expectation, especially in view of the tenacity of their family system. A clan-custom economy precedes political organization, and has to give way before any organic state can be formed. There is no such linkage between state and family as was to be found in the feudalism of the West. Only an empire could maintain itself in China and this by a rigid non-interference with custom-control.

In the West the center of gravity shifted so long ago from private to public relationships and functions that we take this to be normal with all mankind. But in fact the Chinese are now a distance from us represented by the whole of Western political history. Moreover, such machinery of authority as constituted for them the state system has been completely disrupted and beyond hope of reestablishment. The bandit chief occupying a Chinese town is simply and absolutely the type of government that China possesses.

Naturally, there is in China no such thing as public interest. There can only be a concurrence of private interests. With few exceptions the Chinese official is so utterly corrupt that he is incapable of understanding a public trust. It is not the kind of corruption that we know, in which the practitioner is aware that he is bad, and is sooner or later made to feel the consequences. In the Chinese system corruption is a factor in goodness. A man's primary loyalty is to his family. He is therefore entirely justified in plundering public office for private benefit. In fact any other conduct would be considered undutiful. If a man is not a knave in any public capacity he is considered a fool for not being one if he has the opportunity.

For the same reason the corporate organization of business is at present unworkable in China away from foreign protection in the concessions. I had occasion to study the organization and operation of two large Chinese-owned cotton mills. They were on their way to failure, being plundered by everyone from the coolies who stole the yarn to the directors who stole the dividends. This same account is true of the one Chinese-owned transport company which operates on a large scale. Its chief element of permanence is the mortgage of its properties to the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

Regarding the outlook, there can be no discounting the forces pressing China to refashion herself on the Western model. These forces are mostly economic. Trade relations that under the old system were local and personal have become national or at least regional, and impersonal. Prosperity depends upon the exchange of goods over wide areas with the advantages of specialized production where such production is most advantageous. When it is easier to ship wheat from the United States to the mills in Hankow

than to bring it in from the province of Shansi, the Chinese have a practical object lesson in commercial organization which they are not failing to learn. When machine-made goods from abroad can be purchased more cheaply than from the local craftsman, there is practical reason for studying the basis of prosperity. With four-fifths of the population at an economic level no higher than what we call the poverty line, there is a pressing motive to improve the general welfare. These are the forces making for change in China and they have nothing to do with the issues raised against foreigners. As a matter of fact the only prosperous Chinese are those who depend upon foreign protection in the concessions. These cities are object lessons to the Chinese, not of imperialistic oppression, but of the world's new economic organization.

In the efforts to work out what is purely a domestic problem the Chinese have adopted a method which is not altogether novel in their history, that of stimulating and capitalizing resentment. This is likely to divert attention from the real issues, is likely to provoke its own reaction and may produce difficult complications. At the present time Westerners are being held to blame for all of China's difficulties. Resentment, organized and focused against the foreigner, constitutes what is called the Nationalist Movement. It fixes upon the "unequal treaties", extra-territoriality, the concessions and customs control. It is claimed that these have produced the confusion in China, a claim which is entirely incorrect. Every demand could be granted, even to the expulsion of all foreigners and confiscation of their property, without altering for the better in any degree the political situation of the Chinese. The anti-foreign movement is precisely similar to that of the Boxer uprising, and will probably express itself in the same way.

As a matter of fact nothing would better suit the purposes of the United States and Great Britain than to have the Chinese nation quickly find a stable political basis and an adequate administrative system. If and when this is done, the so-called "unequal treaties" will take care of themselves automatically, in the same manner as they did in Japan. There is no virtue in maintaining extraterritoriality or the independence of the concession cities or supervision of the customs, merely for their own sake. As soon as these matters can be handled by the Chinese in a manner to insure the rights of foreigners, every measure of foreign control will be gladly relinquished. The one great hope is the attainment of a stability which carries independence and with it the results indicated, in a reasonable length of time.

From what source then can China secure a governmental fabric which will replace chaos with some measure of co-ordination? For several years, step by step, Russia has been preparing to supply this need. There is no question that the Russian has many qualifications for the task. He is sufficiently oriental to handle the Chinese in Chinese terms. The assertion of authority will probably not come out of Canton. The Russians are merely preparing the way through the Cantonese for a possible real assertion of control through Mongolia and Manchuria where the edge of the knife can be supported by the back. The first difficulty in its way is that a conflict with Japan will become inevitable.

The fact that soon became clear to me through my inquiries in China, was that the Russian policy is to-day precisely what it was a generation ago, that is, to obtain a secure, if not dominant position on the Pacific seaboard. Russia has led the world to believe that her activities are inspired by her conception of a new social order. We have

allowed ourselves through panic in connection with these teachings, to be deluded by what is merely a smoke screen. It is the old and fundamental expansion policy of Russia, and not the theory of the Third International, that is in operation in the Far East. There is no particular effort to teach communism, the very thought of which in China is absurd. But it does supply catch words, such as "capitalism" and "imperialism" which are tools for inflaming normal resentment and focusing it against any chosen one of the Western powers. When the time comes and under the guise of supporting a Chinese faction, such possibly as that of Feng Yu Hsiang, the Russians may assert administrative control, and by the screened injection of Russian detachments be able to carry out effective military action.

While present conditions last, no proposal from Western powers except to relinquish their treaty rights, will be acceptable to the Chinese. But in the long run problems of this kind are solved on a basis of fact rather than that of propaganda. It is true that both Russia and Japan menace the integrity of China, as both have a territorial footing from which to carry out aggressive measures. The Western powers have their trade interests and their investments which can only prove valuable with friendly relationships and mutual profit. If, therefore, the Chinese should desire assistance from outside to reorganize their national affairs, they would be wise to seek or accept it from Western powers.

There is possibly an insuperable difficulty in the universal connection between government and national pride. It seems humiliating to accept guidance, not to mention control, by foreigners. Patriotism always insists upon self-government. This again should be regarded purely as a matter of business in which the Chinese possess as a people, a

more practical judgment than any other. In the first place, that of which China has reason to be proud, is her life and culture, and these have far less relation to governmental mechanics than elsewhere. In the next place, if the Chinese were able to conduct affairs of the western type with the effectiveness of Westerners, they would already have lost the peculiar virtues and distinctive qualities upon which their new place in the world is to depend. When an industrial plant is established and operated, it is not felt to be a humiliation to employ a skilled foreign manager, to train and organize the native employees. It would be foolish to resent that arrangement since no other would bring the results desired.

For over two generations the Maritime Customs department has been conducted by a foreigner working as an official of the Chinese government. As a piece of administration, the Chinese know that this has been effective, honest, and a reason for pride. The clamor of politicians to be given the place of foreign experts should be taken at the real value of all pretensions by politicians.

What then could be done in coöperation with the Western powers to provide a few simple but solid administrative arrangements needed to carry on a central government? The answer is to follow the precedent of the Maritime Customs and establish an administrative council to head a civil service which would quickly become exclusively Chinese. The arrangement should be limited to a period of years and renewed if desired. Such a council should represent a real coöperation between the Chinese and Western governments. It should be the next stage of treaty revision with power to effect modification of extraterritorial privileges, control of the concessions, adjustment of the tariff rates, and all diplomatic authority over the national income. A half

dozen men of the type of Sir Robert Hart, supported by the Chinese and backed by a concert of powers that are party to the treaties, appointed for a period of fifteen years to train and guide a Chinese administrative personnel, would go far toward placing China in the forefront of the family of nations.

Naturally the foregoing suggestion cannot commend itself to the inflamed type of patriotism now rampant among the politicians, schoolboys, and concession coolies. It would however be appreciated by the gentry and the merchants. The point will be reached presently when these real factors in the life of China grow tired of chaos that ruins business, and of extortion that impoverishes civilians, and assert their will in public affairs.

The kind of management described would naturally have only a temporary usefulness to give self-government a chance to grow. This development must certainly begin with the people themselves, not the masses but the selected individuals. There is in China, which for the most part lives in village communities, a well operating method of self-government through the village elders, known as the country gentry. These are heads of families but not separated from the people by any class distinction. Imperial officials always dealt with the people through these elders. They are persons of influence who have the settling of nearly all disputes and see that village affairs are conducted in an orderly manner as defined by custom. It is my opinion that representative government must make its beginning in the villages, expand to areas not too large for the personal character and influence of the gentry to be lost to view, and then develop into representative provincial government. China must in the end be a federation of provinces on a system of representation which should, for a long time, be

as simple as possible. The federal jurisdiction should be as circumscribed as was our own at the beginning. The national government should insure the keeping of order, maintain courts of federal jurisdiction, assist education by grants in aid, establish a currency and credit system, own and operate railway transportation and the basic industries of coal and iron.

These are matters of straightforward governmental mechanics similar to the administration of the Maritime Customs. Legislative functions are so utterly foreign to the Chinese that they should be kept to the minimum for a long time. A small legislative council representing the provinces and including a cabinet of administrative heads would supply all needs.

In the end, a government can do no more than register and enforce such general agreements as a people may need to facilitate their own coöperative efforts. A government is merely a tool by which a people applies the regulations of the game of national life. Often its best service is that of removing obstructions from the path of the collective purpose. So far, in other countries no form of government has created a national life, or brought prosperity, or accomplished any of the magical results that have been wished. It is natural that China, involved in the circumstances of effecting a change, should imagine that all good things can be made to flow from a wise and powerful central authority. There is no basis in history for this expectation. National achievement rests with a people, and not with a government. No people have proved this in a more impressive manner by their past than have the Chinese. Some day Chinese leadership may produce a genius who realizes how very little government China needs. At that point she will have mastered the first and greatest of all political lessons.